

LONG RANGE PLANNING TASK FORCE

January 26, 2005

4:00 p.m.

Earl Bennett Conference Room

Hall opened up the meeting with a statement and handed out the By-Laws for the Flathead County Long Range Planning Task Force. He asked everybody to take the By-Laws home and review them. These By-Laws will be formally approved at the next meeting.

Kennedy stated that she appreciates the opportunity for the cities to participate in the effort. It has always been her opinion that the cities and county need to work together. Kennedy felt that the cities should have additional representation on this Task Force, possibly one elected official, and one member of the city staff and one member-at-large.

Kennedy noted that there is representation on the Task Force for Evergreen. She suggested that there should be representation for Bigfork, Lakeside/Somers and the Canyon area as well.

Representatives from Whitefish felt that the members of this Task Force, whether in the city or county, are Flathead residents. As long as all jurisdictions are adequately represented and thoughts are conveyed, it shouldn't matter. When the Whitefish City Council looked at this Task Force, they felt they should have two members.

Hall stressed his concern with the Task Force becoming too cumbersome if there were too many members. He agreed that one elected official and one staff member would be sufficient to represent the cities. With regard to the outlying areas, it is his intent that the Task Force go into these communities for input.

Jerry Nix pointed out that there are 17 neighborhood plan areas and each of these areas will have individual issues that are important to them. Rather than have representation from each of these areas, the Task Force will have to meet with these neighborhoods individually. He doesn't believe the issues will be that different whether they are conveyed through one person or several people.

Joe Russell hoped that this Task Force would reach decisions by consensus rather than by vote. If they go with the consensus, representation shouldn't be an issue.

It was pointed out that the planning staff will be able to offer input when necessary, but there shouldn't be a planning staff member on the Task Force. There was concern about a common vision not being recognized and the Task Force not having direction.

Hall stated that a Chairman and Vice Chairman need to be appointed. The Chairman will facilitate the meetings. While a facilitator is a good idea, there is no money at this time. With regard to the planning staff, Hall stated that the county plans to have representation at these meetings and hopes the cities decide to have representation as well.

Karen Reeves suggested that the Task Force meet a couple of times to get the feel of how things are moving forward. She agrees that they might need representation from other areas of the valley, but too many people on the Task Force would not be good. They shouldn't try to set any rules tonight with regard to representation. They need to consider this after a couple of meetings. Turner Askew agreed that the Task Force should meet a couple of times before they set any specific direction.

Diana Blend recognized that the planning staff already attends a lot of meetings. This Task Force needs to make sure there isn't a conflict of interest with members of the planning staff attending. She believes this Task Force will have new ideas to offer them. She asked that the planning staff only be involved when the Task Force needs information. She was concerned that the planning office might not accept some of the recommendations put out by this Task Force. Tad Rosenberg added that there are a lot of state and federal regulations that the Task Force may isn't aware of. They need somebody here who knows what these regulations are.

After discussion, it was agreed that the planning staff should not be expected to be at every meeting. If the Task Force is working in a specific area, they will involve the necessary staff members to offer input. It was pointed out that there are a lot of people who would like to participate in this process. Alternate members could be used so everybody who wants to can participate.

It was suggested that the cities have two people to represent them on this Task Force. When necessary, alternate members could attend the meetings to offer input. Myrt Webb stated that the differences between the cities and county aren't that different. They need to talk about the county as a whole. After doing some research, the Task Force will find that the issues are the same regardless of location.

After discussion, it was agreed that the cities would have two members on the Task Force and an appointed alternate member.

Discussion turned to the scope and goals of the Task Force. Some of the issues are:

- Demographics
- Road Standards
- Transportation and road corridors
- Linking road systems together through subdivisions
- Appropriate right-of-way width
- Consistency of road regulations between cities and county
- Required specific right-of-way width during subdivision review
- Impact on schools
- Bicycle/Pedestrian paths
- Recreational facilities
- Cultural facilities
- Minor subdivisions turning into major subdivisions
- Impact fees
- Parks - both private and public
- Water/Sewer facilities
- Planned Unit Developments
- More open space and greenbelt areas
- DEQ monitoring requirements
- Creation of Water Districts & Sewer Districts
- Creation of Rural Special Improvement Districts
- Utilities – water/sewer/gas/telephone, etc.
- Location of future development - Business, Commercial, Industrial
- Location of “bedroom communities”
- Location of residential areas near airports
- Protection of agricultural lands – the right to farm
- Land uses near railroads and airports
- Emergency services; EMS, Fire, Law
- Conservation easements
- Legislation to create funding facilities for impact fees, service districts, etc.
- Solid Waste

Hall asked for any public comment. Russ Crowder stated that he was a member of the Flathead County Planning Board while they were working on the growth policy. This group traveled all over the county searching for public input. He pointed out that there are a lot of county heads at this meeting. However, none of these people attended any of the meetings when his group was searching for input on growth policy. These people need to be involved in the process. He encouraged the Task Force to stick to their objective. They will be successful if they involve the public and have the meetings in the evening.

Hall came up with several communities throughout the United States that have faced, or are facing, the same growth issues as Flathead County. He assigned each member a community to research. The members will report their findings at the next meeting.

The next meeting is scheduled for February 8, 2005 at 4:00 p.m. Tasks to be accomplished by this meeting are:

- Liz Harris – Obtain information on the projected growth

- Myrt Webb – Obtain information on the demographics - where people are moving

- Jed Fisher – Obtain information on all public parks and private parks

- Jerry Nix – Obtain information on the formation of SIDs and RSIDs

- Adopt the By-laws

- Appoint Chairman and Vice Chairman